



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION**

Approved Minutes

SPECIAL MEETING - Thursday, September 28, 2017
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255

PRESENT: Chairperson Bob Frost, Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Steve Dodd, Jace McKeighan, and Cynthia Wenstrom

ABSENT: Vice-Chair Mike Milillo and Commissioner Con Englehorn

STAFF: Bill Murphy, Director of Community Services; Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner; Natural Resources Coordinators Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves and John Loleit; Recreation Leader III Kelly Hayes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 7, 2017 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0).

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Paul Staker read a statement regarding the Desert EDGE from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (MSC). The statement stated that, while the MSC believes that the City of Scottsdale would benefit from the educational and research aspects of the proposal, it does not support the Desert EDGE proposal for a number of reasons which he listed, and, that even if all concerns are addressed, the proposal should be put to a public vote in order to gain widespread

community support. If City Council moves forward with the Desert EDGE in its current form, the MSC will engage with all relevant parties and take an active role in shaping a sustainable facility while maintaining a focus on continuing to focus on its responsibility as a steward of the Preserve.

Chair Frost introduced the Boy Scouts from Troop 466 who were observing the meeting as part of their Star Badge requirements.

6. SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST

Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner, gave background on the McDowell Mountain Frenzy, which is celebrating their sixth annual event. He noted that the City charges the producer a fee of \$3.50 per participant. The special use permit policy requires a recommendation from the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission to the Preserve Director for approval.

Mr. Hamilton outlined the areas of the Preserve that would be affected by the race, noting that the trail use has been the same for the past three years since the event added the 50K event. They are expecting approximately 130 participants this year. Mr. Hamilton said that over the past five years there have been neither positive nor negative comments from Preserve users.

COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE USE PERMIT FOR THE 2017 MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN FRENZY. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0).

7. HEAT IMPACT ON DOGS IN THE PRESERVE

Bill Murphy, Community Services Director, gave an update on the messaging, education, and enforcement activities that are taking place regarding the danger of bringing dogs to the Preserve during high temperatures. He presented photographs of several types of educational signs that talk about heat dangers as well as dog owner courtesies that are being put up at trailheads. Information will continue to be updated regularly on the City of Scottsdale website and the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy website, as well as through a Scottsdale Fire Department release. In addition to signage and web postings, public outreach efforts include dog education events in the Fall and Spring, a Conservancy dog safety training class, and a "dog committee" formed between volunteer City of Scottsdale staff and Conservancy staff.

Discussion occurred regarding the dog death that occurred this summer on the Sunrise Trail and the circumstances and ramifications surrounding that event; the steps the City of Phoenix has taken to address dangers to dogs in the desert; and the pros and cons of education versus imposing heat restriction laws.

Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director and Scott Hamilton discussed the fact that the City of Scottsdale is now enforcing animal cruelty laws under A.R.S. 13-2910, on those owners who endanger their dogs by bringing them to the Preserve during excessive heat times. Discussion regarding enhancing the graphics and verbiage on the warning signs in an effort to increase awareness occurred.

Commissioner Alpert felt strongly that in addition to education, a rule should be imposed on bringing dogs into the Preserve when temperatures were 100 degrees or higher.

Commissioner Wenstrom commented that she was in favor of continuing with education efforts and receiving a report in the future; however, if a rule were implemented, she would be more comfortable with a 90 degree recommendation, because the deaths occurred when temperatures were under 100 degrees.

Commissioner McKeighan stressed the importance of alerting Preserve users to the fact that ground-level temperatures reach higher degrees than the temperatures experienced by humans.

It was consensus of the Commission to continue with education efforts and to reevaluate the situation next year based on the coming year's statistics.

8. TRAILHEAD DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STATUS

- Fraesfield and Granite Trailhead's design and upcoming public meetings

Kroy Ekblaw said that the Fraesfield and Granite Trailheads recently completed planning department review and their comments have been responded to. Dates for the start of the public process are forthcoming.

- Tom's Thumb Summer Construction Progress

Kroy Ekblaw gave an update on the progress of the Tom's Thumb parking lot expansion.

Chair Frost inquired about water availability at Fraesfield and Granite trailheads. Mr. Ekblaw said that water will be available at Fraesfield once water capabilities are installed along Dynamite Road, but Granite will never have water access.

9. STAFF REPORTS

Trails, Signs and Maps

Scott Hamilton gave an update on trails, signs and maps on the middle corridor E, F, G, H, I, noting that the updated north area map is moving towards production. The south central portion of B, C, and D corridor will be looked at as part of the upcoming season's trail planning. He highlighted the signs placed at the completion of Tom's Thumb Trail.

Legend Trail Parking

Kroy Ekblaw presented updates on the progress of Phase 3 areas. He talked about the relocation of the trail, which impedes on the Legend Trail property and coordinating with the Transportation Department and the Police Department on the handling of parking issues. The goal is to sign appropriate parking at the interim Pima and Dynamite Trailheads.

APS 69kv Line progress

Kroy Ekblaw gave an update on the progress of the APS 69kv instillation. Completion of the east/west above-ground work is expected to be the middle of October. They will begin pulling ground runs of cable sometime this fall.

AZ Game and Fish IGA

Scott Hamilton discussed success of the five-year agreement between the City of Scottsdale and Arizona Game and Fish. Staff intends to request that City Council amend the current contract to extend the agreement for an additional five years.

Electric Bikes

Kroy Ekblaw discussed the growing popularity of electric bikes. Currently motorized vehicles, including any form of electric bikes, are prohibited in the Preserve. The thought is that, in the future, electric bicycle users may request an amendment to the Preserve Ordinance.

McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Sunset Review

Kroy Ekblaw noted that the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Sunset Review submission would come before Commissioners for review at next week's meeting. The review will go to the Audit Committee for recommendation in November.

Mr. Ekblaw gave a summary of comments made by City Council during the recent Desert EDGE study session. Another City Council study session discussing the Desert EDGE is scheduled for November 6, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Staff will keep the Commission updated.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Alpert asked about parking along Pima Road and Dynamite north to Legend Trail. Mr. Ekblaw explained that the goal is to get signage, boulders, and updated maps in place and direct people to appropriate parking. Another place where parking has been an issue is along Dixileta, near the gate. Police ticketing can only take place once the City has installed no parking signage.

Commissioner McKeighan commended staff for ordering verbatim minutes for the joint meeting about the Desert EDGE. He expressed concern that the Commission members were not given an opportunity to review the final letter sent from the Chair to City Council. Brief discussion ensued regarding the process of drafting the letter to City Council regarding the Desert EDGE, which included emailed input from Commission members, and time constraints involved with sharing the final letter.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Financial Report and Endowment Update
Review of Improvement Projects for future budgeting in the Preserve
Pima/Dynamite Trailhead Design and Public Meeting Process
McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission Sunset Review
Commercial Use Policy

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. Recorded and Transcribed by eScribers, LLC